



**METRO Blue Line Extension  
Business Advisory Committee Meeting #9  
February 9, 2016  
Blue Line Project Office  
5514 West Broadway Avenue, Suite 200  
Crystal, MN 55428  
8:00 AM – 9:00 AM**

**Meeting Summary**

**BAC Members:** Brad Clift, Ben Colglazier, Charlie Jacobsen, Jeff Washburne, Jim White

**Agency Staff and Guests:** Mary Sue Abel, Paul Danielson, David Davies, Andrew Gillett, Sophia Ginis, Erik Hansen, Jessica Laabs, Nick Landwer, Kathryn O'Brien, Dan Pfeiffer, Juan Rangel, Scott Reed, Alicia Vap, John Welbes

**1. Municipal Consent Update – Mary Sue Abel**

Municipal consent plans were delivered to cities and posted on the project website by December 15, 2015. Four of the six city open houses and public hearings have already taken place, with Robbinsdale and Crystal open houses remaining.

Both the City of Minneapolis and Hennepin County took action on the municipal consent plans at their transportation committee meetings. The full councils will hear the action on February 12<sup>th</sup> for Minneapolis and February 9<sup>th</sup> for Hennepin County.

The remaining actions are scheduled as follows:

- Brooklyn Park: February 22<sup>nd</sup>
- Crystal: February 29<sup>th</sup>
- Robbinsdale: March 2<sup>nd</sup>
- Golden Valley: February 16<sup>th</sup>

**2. 63rd/CSAH 81 Intersection – Alicia Vap**

On November 12<sup>th</sup>, the CMC directed BPO staff to work with stakeholders to study a pedestrian bridge at 63<sup>rd</sup> Avenue/CSAH 81.

CSAH 81 is a house moving route, and the freight tracks also have a high clearance. Due to the needed height, the pedestrian bridge ramp needs to be longer than usual. The proposed ramp would have a loop on the east side of CSAH 81 and a switchback on the west side. The structure is almost 1,900 feet long.

Information requested by the CMC and responses were summarized:

- Feasibility
  - The bridge is technically feasible, but requires clearance over freight rail and CSAH 81 house moving route
- Justification
  - Higher number of pedestrians anticipated with LRT station
  - Walk time via pedestrian bridge more than triple that of at-grade crossing (11 minutes vs. 5.5 minutes)
- Environmental impacts
  - Visual impacts
- Cost
  - \$15-17 million
- Public outreach
  - January 11<sup>th</sup> City Council Work Session: City not supportive of advancing pedestrian bridge, would rather enhance at-grade crossing
- Jurisdictional support
  - Still up for discussion; Hennepin County will not own or maintain

At-grade intersection enhancements could include:

- Wider median, removal of dual left turn lane
- Pedestrian crosswalks
  - Widen from 6-8 feet to 12 feet for visibility, add black paint for contrast
  - Raise crosswalks in free right turn lanes
  - Add stop bars (indicate to cars to stop behind the crosswalk)
- Advanced pedestrian/bike signage (e.g., “Turning vehicles stop for pedestrians”)
- Streetscape enhancements on corner

**Recommendation:** BAC members generally agreed with the direction to pursue analysis of at-grade intersection enhancement.

### 3. Bass Lake Road/CSAH 81 Intersection – Alicia Vap

At its November 12<sup>th</sup> meeting, CMC also directed BPO staff to study a pedestrian bridge at Bass Lake Road/CSAH 81.

On the west side of CSAH 81 and south of Bass Lake Rd, the land is in public ownership so there is some room to work with, but not much. On the east side, there is also somewhat limited area due to the apartment building and the desire to minimize right-of-way acquisitions.

Two designs were advanced:

- Two-elevator design - 24 feet tall with a pier in middle; elevator ramp is adjacent to platform.
- Elevator and ramp design
  - Elevator on west side and ramp on east side

- Ramp on east side is over 200 feet long
- Will need to determine how to clear snow from the ramp

Staff looked at several different alternatives, but the bottom line is that the height can't really change no matter how the bridge is designed. These two designs those for which Crystal staff and city council were interested in seeing more details.

Information requested by the CMC included:

- Feasibility
  - Both options are technically feasible but require clearance over the CSAH 81 house moving route
  - An elevator is needed on the west side due to right-of-way constraints
- Justification
  - Higher number of pedestrians anticipated with LRT station
  - Walk time via pedestrian bridge would be about double that of the at-grade crossing (4.5 minutes vs. 2.5 minutes)
- Environmental impacts
  - Visual
  - Cultural resources (proximity to Becker Park)
- Cost
  - Two-elevator design: \$11-13 million
  - Elevator and ramp design: \$8-11 million
- Public outreach
  - January 14<sup>th</sup> and January 25<sup>th</sup> City Council Work Sessions: Council favors advancing pedestrian bridge options and some form of at-grade intersection enhancements
  - January 25<sup>th</sup> County Station Area Planning Open House: community members expressed support for a pedestrian bridge
- Jurisdictional support
  - Hennepin County will not own or maintain
  - City of Crystal will not own or maintain

The City Council sees this as a necessary improvement as a result of the station at Bass Lake Road. There is some further discussion needed to determine who would own and maintain it.

At-grade intersection enhancements could include:

- Wider median, narrowed lanes
- Pedestrian crosswalks
  - Widen from 6-8 feet to 12 feet for visibility, add black paint for contrast
  - Raise crosswalks in free right turn lanes
  - Add stop bars
- Advanced pedestrian/bike signage
- Streetscape enhancements on corner (e.g., additional lighting)

It was noted that this issue will be in front of the CMC on Thursday 2/11, and project staff will be looking for the CMC to give additional direction.

#### 4. Noise Analysis Update – Scott Reed

At a summary level, there would be few impacts along Olson Memorial Highway, some impacts along the trench in Golden Valley and Robbinsdale, and then more impacts when LRT comes out of the trench in Robbinsdale and Crystal, especially near at-grade crossings. North of Bass Lake Road, impacts would lessen, except at some crossings. There would be relatively few impacts along West Broadway Avenue; the roadway noise dominates there so the train noise doesn't add much. The train noise has more impact in the relatively quiet trench and Crystal/Robbinsdale town center areas.

Trains typically sound their horn at every at-grade crossing shared with freight rail. This would cause several hundred noise impacts to residences and other noise-sensitive land uses. Mitigation strategies include:

- Quiet zones at intersections shared with freight
  - Trains would still sound their bell but not their horn, eliminating many impacts
- Installing wayside devices at quiet zone intersection
  - Bell would sound just at crossing rather than as the train approaches the crossing
- Noise barriers
  - Variable heights based on conditions
  - Have a good sense of where they would be located, working now on how high they will be
  - Design work on material types, textures, and colors will continue after the Final EIS
- Interior testing at receptors where, even with implementation of mitigation measures, impacts remain
  - Noise analysis considers the noise you would hear outside your home, so further testing is required to understand what the noise level would be inside the home
  - May prompt additional mitigation (e.g., insulation similar to what MAC does for residents near the airport)

Overview by city:

- Minneapolis
  - Noise barrier near Plymouth Ave Station
  - Interior testing at 4 properties located in Homewood just north of Olson Memorial Highway
- Golden Valley
  - Noise barrier on east side of BNSF corridor along Kewanee Way
  - Interior testing at 1 property located south of Golden Valley Road Station
- Robbinsdale
  - Quiet zone and wayside audible devices at 3 intersections:
    - 41<sup>st</sup>/Noble Ave
    - 42<sup>nd</sup> Ave

- 45 ½ Ave
  - Assuming closure of 39 ½ Ave – recommending as noise mitigation measure
    - Want confirmation from City Council
  - Noise barriers
    - East side of BSNF corridor: along Indiana Ave on north side of Grimes Pond with gap at substation, continuing up to 40 ½ Ave and from 45 ½ Ave to 47 ½ Ave
    - West side of BSNF corridor: north of 36<sup>th</sup> Ave corridor from 38<sup>th</sup> Ave to 40 ½ Ave and along Railroad Ave between 41<sup>st</sup> Ave and 42<sup>nd</sup> Ave
  - Interior testing at 18 properties:
    - 3 along Indiana
    - 1 at 36<sup>th</sup> Ave
    - 2 at 38<sup>th</sup> Ave to 40 ½ Ave
    - 3 along Regent
    - 3 near TH 100
    - 6 at 45 ½ Ave
- Crystal
  - Quiet zone and wayside audible devices at 3 intersections:
    - West Broadway
    - Corvallis
    - Bass Lake Road
  - Noise barriers on east side of BNSF corridor from 47<sup>th</sup> Ave to south of Corvallis
  - Interior testing at 1 property - apartment building just north of West Broadway
- Brooklyn Park
  - Quiet zone and wayside audible devices at 2 intersections:
    - 63<sup>rd</sup> Ave
    - 71<sup>st</sup> Ave
  - Interior testing at 3 properties near 93<sup>rd</sup> Ave

## 5. Sochacki Park Update – Scott Reed

Generally when referring to Sochacki Park, we are referring to the original component in Robbinsdale. Access to the park is needed to build the bridge over Grimes Pond. Staff looked at other alternatives that would not impact the park, but they would have very significant impacts on residents in the area (including acquisition of homes).

Staff initially focused on the southern end of the park to avoid tree removal, but in talking with park staff many of the trees there are invasive so they would like to have them removed and replaced with native species.

A mitigation plan developed with input from staff at Three Rivers Park District, Cities of Robbinsdale and Golden Valley, Golden Valley Open Space Committee, and Robbinsdale Park and Rec Committee.

The mitigation plan focuses on:

- Appropriate clean up and restoration of construction staging areas

- According to the MPCA, there has been lots of dumping in the park – need to clean up whatever we disturb
- Enhancements to trails and other park features
  - Enhance trail through park to Mary Hills Nature Area
  - Build trail connection from Theodore Wirth Park to Mary Hills

Next steps:

- February 2: Golden Valley public hearing
- February 8: Sochacki Park Joint Powers Agreement Board meeting
- February 9: Robbinsdale public hearing
- February 16: Golden Valley City Council action
- March 2: Robbinsdale City Council action

## **6. Future Topics: Committee Feedback**

Suggested topics from the last meeting were summarized and reviewed:

- Creating a safe environment for bikes and peds
- How to get passengers from the station to where they want to go
- Lessons learned from other LRT lines on business impacts
- Benefits of transit to local businesses
- Impacts to traffic – construction and operation
- Health impacts
- Economic equity benchmarks

## **7. Member and Committee Reports/Public Forum**

No comments.

## **8. Adjourn**

Next regularly scheduled BAC meeting March 8.